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RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 4939
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3557
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0669
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 3646
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2726
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 7438
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5159
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1828
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000294

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS
MCC FOR S GROFF, D NASSIRY, E BURKE AND F REID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [EAID](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: GERMAN EMBASSY PROTESTS HARASSMENT OF
ITS AID AGENCY IN THE EAST

REF: COLOMBO 286

Classified By: DCM James R. Moore, for reasons 1.4(b, d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The German Ambassador has lodged a protest with Foreign Minister Bogollagama regarding separate recent incidents in Trincomalee and Batticaloa involving their aid agency and, apparently, members of the LTTE splitoff "Karuna group." German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the German public corporation for development, experienced harassment from security and paramilitary forces in Batticaloa and Trincomalee Districts in early February (reftel). On several occasions, members of the Tamileela Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP, a.k.a. "Karuna group") in Batticaloa District asked GTZ staff for materials for their camp, eventually taking what they wanted by force. In Trincomalee, local GTZ staff - along with all neighborhood residents over the age of twelve - were rounded up by security forces and then turned over for questioning by masked men who they believed were TMVP members or other government informants. This last incident, in particular, reveals the hollowness of Government of Sri Lanka's (GSL) security forces' denials of ties to the Karuna group. End Summary.

Karuna Bullies Aid Group for Materials

12. (C) On January 31, two boys approached a GTZ storage facility in Onthachimadam, introducing themselves as TMVP members (the political wing of the LTTE-breakaway "Karuna group"). They demanded 10 rolls of barbed wire for use at their camp in Kaluwanchikudy. One of the boys was armed. The storage facility manager asked the boys to contact the main GTZ office in Batticaloa regarding distribution of materials. The following day, four boys arrived on motorcycles, one with a gun, and told the manager that the TMVP officer-in-charge had asked them to bring the barbed wire from the store. They threatened to harm the manager if he did not turn over the goods and ordered him to report to the TMVP office later that day. On the evening of February

2, 10 boys came to the store and asked to meet with GTZ staff. Since none were available, they waited an hour and then left.

13. (C) On February 5, GTZ staff met with Batticaloa District Secretary S. Arulrasa regarding the continuing demands for materials from the TMVP. GTZ wanted to hand over the materials to Arulrasa for safekeeping and distribution. Arulrasa, however, felt he could not be responsible for the materials and felt the government would be at risk if it got involved. After the meeting, GTZ staff went to visit the GTZ storehouse where the incidents had taken place. When they arrived, four or five TMVP members were present, one with a gun. They had broken onto the property, opened the store, and loaded several bags of cement and rolls of barbed wire onto a truck. They told the GTZ staff that they were taking by force what GTZ had refused to give them. They recorded the names of the GTZ staff and ordered them to come to the TMVP office for a meeting. When two local GTZ staff went to buy replacement locks for the storehouse, two individuals stopped them, pulled a gun on them, and threatened to kill them and a third GTZ employee if they didn't cooperate in the future.

Detention and Questioning of Local GTZ Staff

14. (C) On the morning of February 1, 20 Sri Lankan Army and Police officers made an unannounced entry and search of the residence of the GTZ Team Leader in Upuveli, Trincomalee. The building was clearly marked as a GTZ residence. The GTZ Team Leader and three international consultants were home at

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the time. The security forces took down personal details on the international and national staff present. Twenty minutes later, Navy troops arrived and ordered all Sri Lankans above the age of 12 to proceed to a checkpoint. Three GTZ local staff members and their families traveled to the location. The international GTZ staff went to the checkpoint to inquire about the local staff. They observed 500-700 Sri Lankans being forced to proceed single file before five masked men for questioning. According to GTZ, these men were either members of the Karuna group or possibly Tamil informers working for the government. The GTZ local staff were released, but 50 other individuals were selected by the masked men and then detained by police.

15. (C) COMMENT: There does not appear to be any strong connection between the incidents in Batticaloa and Trincomalee, other than that they involved unpleasant encounters of the German aid corporation with security forces and/or the Karuna group. The German Ambassador met Foreign Minister Bogollagama last week to protest these events. The incident in Trincomalee was probably a forced recruitment operation for the Karuna group's paramilitary cadres, but could also have been a cordon-and-search operation to find LTTE operatives or sympathizers. The brazenness of the Karuna group's activities in the East is troubling enough. GSL security forces' denials of involvement with the Karuna group, already suspect, are becoming increasingly implausible.
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